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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010

Media Highlights:

How the US Is Playing

US Missionary Weapons. 'Bible Coded' American Rifles in Iraq (Yeni Safak)

All major papers carry an ABC report about passages from the Holy Bible inscribed on the binoculars mounted on the rifles used by American soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. Mainstream Sabah says the serial number, 32JN812, on "Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight" binoculars refers to a verse in Holy Bible, "Those who follow and believe in Jesus will not be left in the dark." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says such "mystery" weapons used by the US has recalled President Bush's remark of "Crusades" regarding the war in Iraq.

Violence and Looting On the Rise in Haiti. Media outlets continue sensationalist reports on the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Mainstream Milliyet headline reads, "Violence Grips Haiti," and notes, "looting and violence are growing in Port-au-Prince, the capital of quake-hit Haiti, as international aid workers strive to provide the survivors with basic supplies." Liberal Radikal carries a front page headline "Eyes of Haiti" with a picture of an orphan and expresses concern over the young victims in Haiti noting that "UNICEF fears that as many as 'two million children' have been affected by the disaster. French and US governments are easing the entry of orphaned Haitian children into their countries in the wake of the devastating earthquake." Radikal also adds the "US Aid campaign Continues" and says that "US troops provided security for water and food aid deliveries in Haiti." Islamist oriented Yeni Safak in "Don't Leave Me," observes "violence and chaos slow aid delivery in Haiti. Some of the search and rescue teams leave the collapsed areas for lack of security," and highlights "Turkish IHH has been looking after 700 orphans. Turkish search and rescue team GEA has also pulled three more people alive from the rubble." In an attached story, Yeni Safak headline reads "We Won't Occupy Haiti" and quotes US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that "the US is chiefly involved in distributing relief and will support the UN in providing security."

In the Headlines

Yerevan's 'Genocide' Obstinacy (Sabah)

Media outlets report Ankara had been uneasy over a top Armenian court's reference to the "killings of 1915" in its justification about the "constitutionality" of protocols with Turkey. The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) sources said the "reference" is against the essence of the normalization process with Yerevan. "This decision contains preconditions and restrictive provisions that impair the objective and spirit of the protocols," the MFA said in a statement Monday. The Armenian court's January 12 decision says the protocols with Turkey conform to the Armenian Constitution, but stipulates that the agreement must not contradict Paragraph 11 of the Declaration of Independence, the section that offended Ankara. It states, "Armenia supports the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia." The MFA sources told papers the court's reference to a declaration rejecting even the questioning of the 1915 killings of Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire is against the essence of the normalization process with Yerevan. "Turkey, in line with its accustomed allegiance to international commitments, maintains its adherence to the primary provisions of the protocols. We expect the same allegiance from the Armenian government," said the MFA statement. Mainstream Haberturk says the ruling of the Armenian court "deadlocked" the process between Turkey and Armenia.

Television stations are reporting a statement from Foreign Minister Davutoglu this morning as "he conveys his concerns over the protocol issue to Yerevan."

Pundits from mainstream Milliyet predominantly dedicate their

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columns to the Turkish-Armenia normalization protocols focusing on interpretation differences. In "Protocols Are Facing Erosion" Sami Kohen observes the current process is a result of "both sides bringing interpretation based on concrete differences which protocols tried to eliminate through diplomatic wording." Given the accusation coming from both Yerevan and Ankara, the columnist worries that "it may lead to a complete cancellation of ratification procedure." In "Armenia Protocol Faces Difficulty" columnist Taha Akyol considers it an important mistake by the Armenian Constitutional Court: "By approving the protocol but at the same by inserting genocide claims, the Armenian court broke one of the moving legs. From now on, it will be very difficult to move ahead with the protocol process. International diplomacy should realize this is a mistake coming from Armenian side that has to be resolved first." In "Have Protocols Died Already?" columnist Semih Idiz notes "it would be too optimistic to believe" that the genocide issue will disappear after the protocols: "Eventually all matters come down to the Armenian genocide issue. Even if the protocols are fully implemented this issue will not go away. This is a long process which requires a considerable timeframe because both Turkey and Armenia have some unchangeable points on this matter."

Energy Minister Yildiz: "Nuclear Agreement Will Come to Parliament Soon" (Sabah)

Energy Minister Taner Yildiz stressed that, whether through opening tenders or without it, within the framework of laws and legislation, steps will be taken regarding the nuclear plant this year. Mainstream Sabah quoted Taner as saying "An international agreement will be prepared on this issue and will be submitted to the Parliament. These kinds of agreements are above the legislation." Yildiz also said "regarding the 'buy or pay' project on natural gas, we expect a gesture from Iran and Russia for two to three years." Responding to a question regarding the six billion cubic meter of natural gas Turkey buys from Russia, Minister Yildiz said "We can say that this issue leans towards the private sector. This is an opportunity."

PM Erdogan: "Saudi Arabia as Important as the EU for Turkey" (Milliyet)

Addressing a group of businessmen in Riyadh, PM Erdogan rejected allegations that there is a shift in Turkish foreign policy and said "we care about our cooperation with Saudi Arabia as much as we attach importance to the cooperation with the EU." Intellectual/Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines "Let's Lift Visa

Procedures" and reports that PM Erdogan proposed eliminating visa requirements with Saudi Arabia and urged Saudi businessmen to invest in Turkey. Zaman quoted Erdogan on concern for Gaza: "There is nothing more natural than Turkey to show concern for the Palestinians and Gaza, not because we are Muslim but because we are humans. Would we not send aid to Haiti because the majority of them are Christian?"

The Head of Al-Qaeda in Turkey, Abu-Zer, is a Turk (Milliyet) Mainstream Milliyet reports, the head of al-Qaeda in Turkey, Serdar Elbasa - who is also known by the codename Abu Zer and Abu Hureyre - was captured during operations conducted by counterterrorism teams in Ankara and the southern city of Adana on Monday. Information obtained during the operations indicates that Serdar Elbasa, a Turk, was serving as al-Qaeda's head for Turkey and the Caucasus region. Security forces found evidence showing that the terrorist organization was preparing for attacks against the police forces in Turkey and Turkish forces under ISAF in Kabul.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

33 suspects were taken into custody in operations against al-Qaeda in Ankara and Adana.

On January 25, the presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan will meet in Turkey under the auspices of President Gul.

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On January 21, Turkey's business grouping TUSIAD will elect its new chairman.

Israeli Foreign Ministry U/S Yossi Gal paid a visit to Ankara for "political consultations."

Former Israeli Ambassador to Turkey, Alon Liel, said Israel suffered a "defeat" in its attempt to humiliate Turkey.

Energy Minister Taner Yildiz says the Turkish Parliament is going to pass a "special regulation" for the construction of a nuclear plant.

A London court rules that British couple David and Linda Orams must demolish their holiday home in northern Cyprus, hand the land back to the original owner of the property, and pay him damages.

A Vatican document says Islamic extremism forments most of the conflicts in the Middle East and makes life difficult for Christians.

The head of Boeing France said US aircraft manufacturer Boeing has received 851 orders for its long-range 787 Dreamliner plane from 56 airlines.

JEFFREY